

ARTICLE APPEARED
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WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
10 SEPTEMBER 1980

CIA Chief Sees Nothing Wrong In Brzezinski's Warning to Billy

Bert Lance Refuses to Talk Behind Closed Doors

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Washington Star Staff Writers

CIA Director Stansfield Turner told a Senate subcommittee yesterday that he saw nothing wrong with Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Carter's national security adviser, alerting Billy Carter to the existence of sensitive intelligence reports on the president's brother's dealings with Libya.

The same information, which Turner passed on to Brzezinski in March, was withheld from Justice Department investigators until early June by Attorney General Benjamin R. Civiletti, who defended his decision on the grounds that disclosure could compromise a sensitive intelligence source.

In a closed-door session with the Senate subcommittee investigating the Billy Carter-Libya connection, Turner did not share the concern of some of the senators that Brzezinski may have acted improperly in calling the president's brother with the information, according to Senate sources.

In another development, former Budget Director Bert Lance walked out of a meeting with subcommittee attorneys after they turned down his demand that his deposition be taken in a public session.

Lance, a close friend of the president, insisted that the press be allowed to sit in on the session, citing the "great harm being done by well-planned and well-conceived leaks to the media about testimony or information taken in private."

The former Georgia banker, referring to the ordeal of the federal investigation into his banking practices, said, "Ever since 1977, I've been abused, villified and smeared . . . by well-orchestrated and well-planned leaks to the media."

He said the same Washington "powercrats" who leaked information on his case are now orchestrating a similar campaign against Billy Carter for political purposes.

During his brief visit to Washington, Lance did not meet with any of the subcommittee members. They spent most of the afternoon questioning Turner and other witnesses in a hideaway office on the fourth floor of the Capitol. Police refused to allow reporters on the same floor.

Emerging from the session, two senators expressed dissatisfaction with Turner's testimony.

"In my personal view, it raises a question of judgment," Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., said.

Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., told reporters: "I think somebody's playing games with the intelligence system around here."

Dole said listening to Turner was "the most frustrating hour and a half I have spent so far." He said Turner revealed nothing that could not have been made public and questioned the need for the closed-door session.

Dole also said his impression is that the CIA director does not understand what all the fuss is about over Brzezinski's handling of the intelligence information that first alerted U.S. officials to Billy Carter's financial dealings with Libya.

Turner told the senators that he believed he had done the right thing by taking the information to Brzezinski, and added that if the "president's barber" had been involved in a similar situation, with a country like Libya, he would have done the same thing, according to Senate sources.

Turner said he considered it his duty to warn the president, through Brzezinski, about his brother's activities. He said he didn't share the information with other administration officials because he didn't consider it anyone else's business.

The subcommittee paused long enough during its closed-door meeting yesterday to draft a statement requesting Lance to reconsider his refusal not to give a deposition in executive session.

Lance, who was accompanied by his wife, LaBelle, invited reporters and television camera crews into the hearing room where subcommittee lawyers were waiting to take his deposition. But police would allow only the Lances and his attorneys to pass.

"What few of my constitutional rights that were preserved and protected during the three years of the Lance affair resulted from the daily presence of the media at my trial,"

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In response to Lance's walkout, the subcommittee issued a statement late yesterday saying, "It is not the purpose . . . to harass or otherwise embarrass Mr. Lance, but rather to proceed in the same manner as the subcommittee proceeded with other witnesses."

The statement points out that a transcript of every deposition given to the subcommittee is "promptly" made available to the witness, who is free to make it public.

"It is the belief of the subcommittee that Mr. Lance can assist it in its pursuit of the facts in this matter," the statement said.

Lance's name has come up at least twice in testimony before the subcommittee.

Billy Carter and his business associate, Henry R. "Randy" Coleman, have testified that they turned to Lance on two occasions to ask for names of those who could assist them in their quest for business dealings with Libya.

When they were looking into the possibility of an agricultural export deal with Libya, Lance provided them with the name of an Atlanta lawyer. On another occasion, they asked Lance for the name of someone who could help them with a proposed oil deal, and he gave them the name of a London banker.

Also, President Carter has said that on Feb. 24, 1979, he asked Lance to visit Billy Carter to encourage him "to take care of his health, his finances and to stay away from Libya for awhile."

Lance refused to say if he has discussed the case with the president. He told reporters he was "not involved" in any part of Billy Carter's dealings with Libya.

Public hearings resume today with testimony from President Carter's chief counsel, Lloyd N. Cutler. The subcommittee is expected to question Cutler about whether he had followed the daily progress of the Justice Department's investigation of Billy Carter through Cutler's frequent contacts with Billy Carter's attorneys, Stephen J. Pollak and Henry Ruth Jr.